

Welcome to the First...

MIGHTY MARVEL COMIC CONVENTION



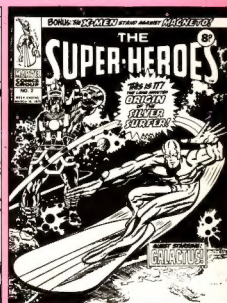
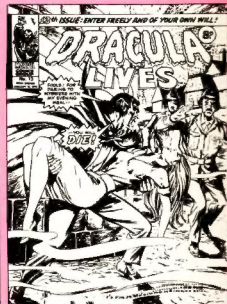
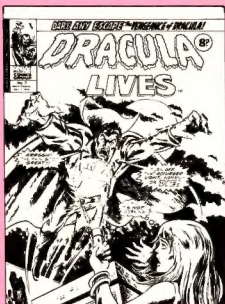
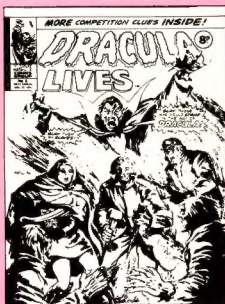
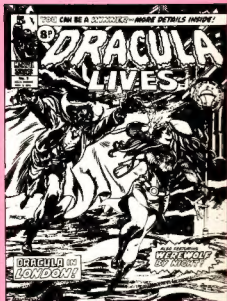
march
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24!

HOTEL
COMMODORE



THE BEST OF THE BRITISH

Marvel's seven British weeklies (THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, DRACULA LIVES, MIGHTY WORLD OF MARVEL, SPIDER-MAN COMICS WEEKLY, THE SUPER-HEROES, PLANET OF THE APES, THE AVENGERS) occasionally sport original covers. Here is just a sampling of what the foreign fans have grown to expect from Marvel.



A GREETING FROM STAN LEE!

You wanted it! You asked for it! You demanded it! And now, here it is—the greatest occasion in the history of comicdom! The mighty *Marvel Con!*

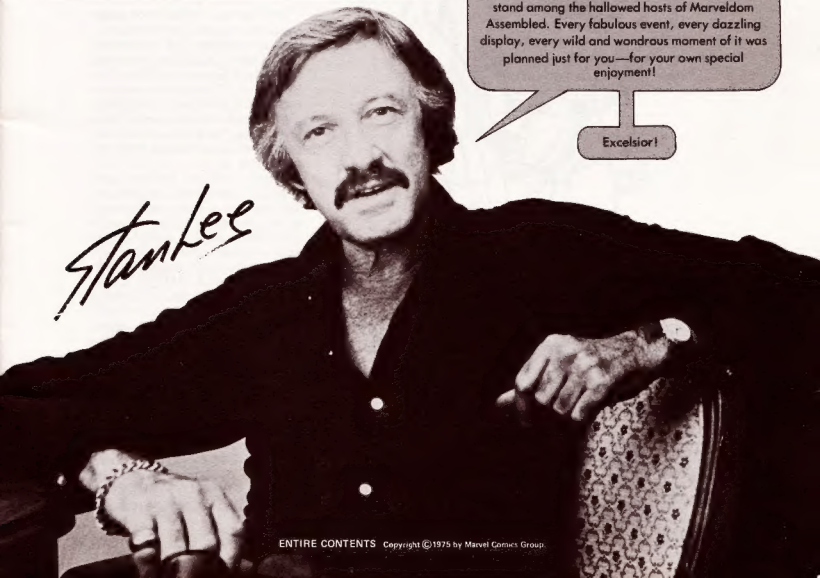
Stay as long as you like. See as much as you can. Gather mirth and memories that will linger for years. And, most important of all, never ever let yourself forget—you're the guest of honor! We're nothing without you!

Mingle with hundreds of other merry Marvelites. Greet old friends and meet many new. See your favorite Marvel artists, writers, editors, and all the other brilliant Bullpen biggies who've entertained and enthralled you through the years. Take all the snapshots you want. Visit the many dealers who've come from near and far to help you buy, sell, or swap comics for your collection. See the zillions of books, novelties, posters, and assorted souvenirs which are all around you. Seize this golden opportunity to collect the autographs you've always wanted, and to shake the friendly hands of the terrifically talented creative crew that have made this truly The Marvel Age of Comics!

Feel welcome, warm, and wanted, True Believer, as you stand among the hallowed hosts of Marveldom Assembled. Every fabulous event, every dazzling display, every wild and wondrous moment of it was planned just for you—for your own special enjoyment!

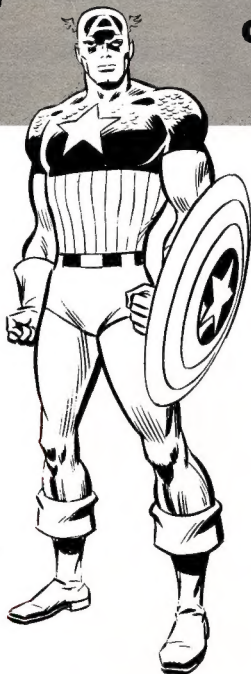
Excelsior!

Stan Lee



IN THE BE

**ON THE 35TH
OF THE FIRST MARVEL
OF MARVEL'S**



The year was 1939. Adolf Hitler was preparing to march into Poland, thereby initiating the staggering conflict which would last six years and reduce Europe to rubble. The New York World's Fair was proclaiming the glories of a technological future. And on the newsstands of America, the first costumed superheroes were making their appearances.

Comics sold well that year, and dozens of new publishers both small and prestigious were beginning to get into the business. As the summer drew to a close, a pulp magazine publisher named Martin Goodman launched his comic line with the first issue of MARVEL COMICS, dated November, 1939. Printed in Buffalo, New York, it sold for a dime, had the usual 64 pages, was roughly 8x10½ inches in size and contained stories and art which, by today's standards, were unbelievably crude. But the fascination of comics then lay in the medium and not the message. The item sold well enough to warrant a second issue (now titled MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS), and the third issue was joined on the stands by the first issue of DARING MYSTERY COMICS. The Marvel Comics Group had

by George Olshevsky

GINNING

ANNIVERSARY COMIC: AN OVERVIEW GOLDEN AGE

begun.

MARVEL COMICS #1 introduced two characters who were destined to become as popular as any who appeared during the Golden Age: the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner. Both were primal—unprecedented in the long history of adventure heroes. The former was a synthetic creature who could turn his body to flames at will (although not in the first issue) and could use the energy of the flame to soar through the air or melt through the walls of buildings. The latter was the prince of the undersea kingdom; possessed of super strength; winged ankles; a triangular face with arched, curving eyebrows; and a general dislike for ordinary human beings. The Torch was the creation of Carl Burgos, while Sub-Mariner was the brainchild of the late Bill Everett; in one form or another they survived the ravages of World War II, the Comics Code Authority and the Silver Age of Comics to reappear in the present day—a fate reserved for remarkably few Golden Age heroes.

All told, MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS ran 159 issues, of which the first 92 featured costumed superheroes (the remaining 67



THE GOLDEN AGE LIVES! Even today, an array of Golden Age heroes can be found decorating Marvel covers.

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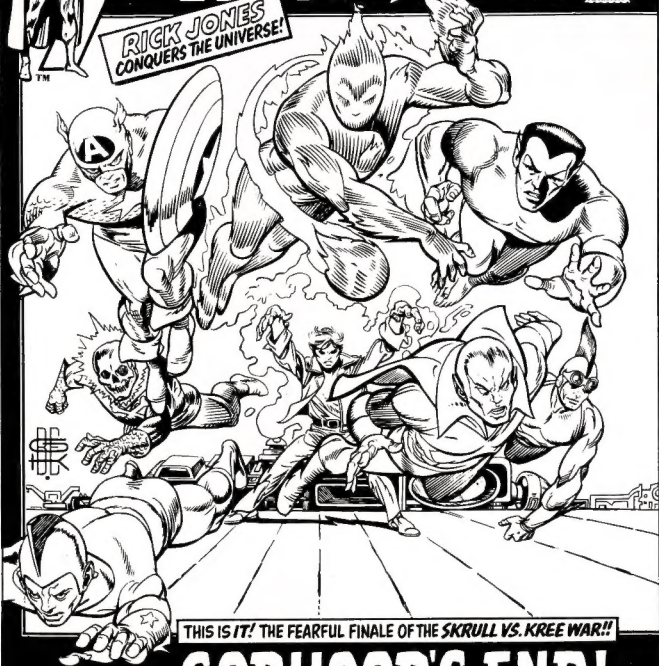


the

AVENGERS

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BY THE
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AUTHORITY

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THIS IS IT! THE FEARFUL FINALE OF THE SKRULL VS. KREE WAR!!

GODHOOD'S END!

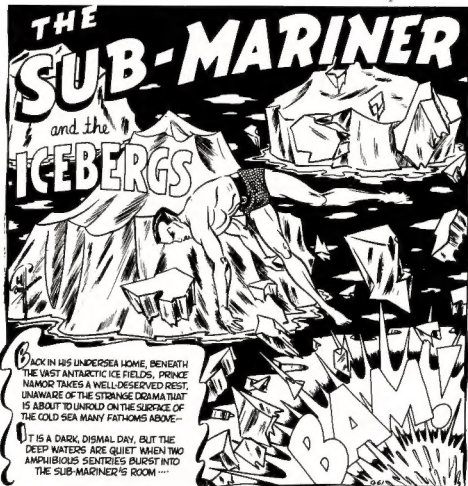
were titled MARVEL TALES and carried only weird stories). It was the backbone of the Marvel line of the 1940's; many characters had their first stories appear in its pages: Paul Gustavson's Angel, who unlike his modern namesake had no wings and could not fly; Bob Byrd and Ben Thompson's Ka-Zar, a Jungle hero whose stories first appeared in a Marvel pulp magazine even before MARVEL COMICS #1; the Vision; the Patriot; Miss America; Namora and others.

MARVEL MYSTERY's companion DARING MYSTERY proved nowhere near as popular. It never carried stories with the impact of the MARVEL MYSTERY superheroes, and the hero lineup changed almost entirely with each succeeding issue. As a result, it ran only eight numbers. Then its title was changed to COMEDY COMICS, which ran 26 more issues (#9-34) and featured only funny animal stories in the latter 23. Some of the more memorable DARING MYSTERY characters were the Thunderer, the Fiery Mask, Marvel Boy, the Fin and the Silver Scorpion.

Soon after the first DARING MYSTERY came MYSTIC COMICS. Again, it wasn't a winner. It ran ten issues and introduced new heroes in practically every one: the Black Marvel, the Purple Mask, the Blazing Skull, Hercules and others. The Marvel Comics Group had yet to find a direction.

By 1940, Hitler had virtually become dictator of Europe. He steam-rollered any countries which threatened his iron rule; only Britain held out with any effectiveness. In the United States, many quarters viewed his tactics with alarm. The fear of involvement in a European war grew in the minds of the populace. And RED RAVEN COMICS appeared on the stands.

RED RAVEN ran only one issue (August, 1940), but it carried a story, titled "Mercury", by an up-and-coming artist/storyteller named Jack Kirby. In it was the god Pluto, the personification of evil, masquerading as a dictator named Hendler, with a hairbrush moustache and a commanding oratory. The message was unmistakable: If ordinary heroes fought ordinary evil, then superheroes must fight the



superevil of the Axis. While Kirby would later claim that RED RAVEN carried his worst work ever done for comics, the heroes vs. Axis theme seized the Marvel Comics Group. Under the editorship of a precocious teenager named Stan Lee, the Sub-Mariner began splitting U-boats filled with ugly German louts jabbering in Pennsylvania Dutch accents, the Torch was melting Nazi super-cannons and the Angel was destroying rings of fifth column spies.

As 1940 drew to a close, still a year before the United States would

enter the war, the first issue of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby's CAPTAIN AMERICA blazed out at the reading public. Dated March, 1941, its cover featured a red, white and blue-costumed freedom-fighter delivering a smashing fist right in the Führer's face. If there was any doubt as to the role which America would play in the roiling conflict, it was erased by the figure of Steve Rogers; a buck private whose sole function was keeping the Army in peeled potatoes, but who in costume was the symbol of American self-righteousness. More than any other

comic book character, Cap polarized the American public against the Nazis; it is by no means incorrect to claim that Cap was in the backs of the minds of all the GI's as they sweated in their trenches and gradually rolled back Hitler's armies.

Cap appeared in 73 issues of his own comic, accompanied in most of them by his sidekick Bucky Barnes. The 74th issue was titled CAPTAIN AMERICA'S WEIRD TALES, and was the last Golden Age comic in

which he appeared. In #75 of WEIRD TALES, Cap was gone. Three more issues of CAPTAIN AMERICA (#76-78), with Cap fighting the Communist menace, drawn by John Romita, appeared in 1954. And he returned, triumphantly, in the Marvel Age which unfolded in the 1960's.

Meanwhile, the Torch and the Sub-Mariner were increasing in popularity. A few months before Cap appeared, Torch was given his own book, THE HUMAN TORCH,

which he shared on a two-to-one basis with Sub-Mariner. In the first issue, given the number #2 for some obscure reason known only to the publishers, Torch met his kid sidekick, Toro, at a carnival. Toro was a human youngster who could "flame on" just like the Torch; because of this, he had been snapped up by the carnival's freak show and placed on exhibit. No further explanation or origin story was tendered, and none was needed. Toro joined Torch in his regular episode in MARVEL MYSTERY #18, and the two were practically inseparable thenceforward. Torch's own book went 35 issues, with three more (#36-38) during the brief 1954 revival.

Sub-Mariner never had a *bona fide* sidekick, although he was joined by his cousin Namora after the war was over. He was far too aloof, almost a villain at times. As a result, he often came to blows with the Torch. Torch and Subby had their first sizzling fire-and-water run-in as early as MARVEL MYSTERY #8, and they also clashed in #9 and #10. But they both agreed that their mutual differences were as nothing beside the menace of the Hun, and joined together versus the Nazis in #17. But even these skirmishes proved miniscule by comparison with the extravaganza which hit the stands early in 1941: a mammoth 60-page battle between Torch, Subby and the Axis in HUMAN TORCH #5, which ultimately dunked all of New York City beneath a massive tidal wave, sank the Rock of Gibraltar and nearly brought on another ice age! This astonishing story, certainly the most apocalyptic event ever portrayed in a Golden Age comic, was composed by a dozen artists and writers liberally supplied with pencils, ink, paper and beer, working literally around the clock for an entire weekend.

1941 was probably Marvel's banner year. Not only was Cap in his best issues and Torch and the Sub-Mariner involved in sensational battles, but a spate of new titles emerged: Sub-Mariner in his own title (32 issues, with ten more (#33-42) in 1954-55); ALL WINNERS, featuring all the principal





CAPTAIN AMERICA WANTS YOU

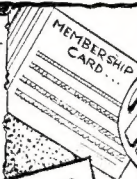
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heroes together in one book (20 issues, with the twentieth numbered #21); YOUNG ALLIES, which teamed up the various sidekicks with a gang of Brooklyn street urchins (20 issues); U.S.A. COMICS (17 issues) and MISS FURY, Marvel's first superheroine, done from reprints of a newspaper strip by Tarpe Mills (eight issues).

When the Japanese destroyed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Marvel went after the Axis with a vengeance. "Remember Pearl Harbor" was emblazoned on every title. Suddenly, the heroes found themselves battling yellow, slant-eyed, fanged oriental menaces. Every issue was an insult to the enemy; they regularly administered kicks-in-the-pants to Hirohito, Hitler and Mussolini, after hairsbreadth escapes from nefarious tortures of acid and poison gas—all portrayed in loving detail on the covers of the comics by Al Gabriele, Syd Shores, Al Avison and especially Alex Schomburg. Where most other comics companies remained uncommitted or allowed their heroes only carefully controlled contact with the enemy, the Marvels dug in their heels and ripped the Axis to pieces. Cap alone destroyed a million Japanese in one episode!

As the war progressed, and as the Axis began to retreat, the villains became more scheming, more devious and slithering. Realizing, somehow, that their aboveground forces were no match for the skilled opposition of the Allies, the enemy tried to destroy from within, by sabotage and subversion. The Marvel heroes were ready for that, too. Fifth columnists by the score were constantly unearthed in the Great Struggle. Terrible sorcerers and hideous monsters in the service of the Nazis were rooted out and destroyed. More titles appeared: TOUGH KID SQUAD (one issue), ALL SELECT (eleven issues), KID KOMICS (eleven issues), AMAZING and COMPLETE (one issue each, the latter being #2), MISS AMERICA (two issues, with three more superheroine stories after it became MISS AMERICA MAGAZINE), BLONDE PHANTOM (eleven issues, beginning where ALL SELECT left off); and some old

titles were reinstated: DARING (four more issues, beginning at #9 where DARING MYSTERY left off) and MYSTIC (four more issues, beginning again at #1).

At last the war was over. The Allies had won (was there ever any doubt?). And the Marvel heroes were out of a job. For three more years they drifted about, picking off black market operations, pennyante hoods and stray saboteurs. They even teamed up twice (in ALL WINNERS #19 and #21) as the All-Winners Squad. But on the whole, their stories became dull, repetitious, formula-ridden. The Marvel editors wanted to move on to

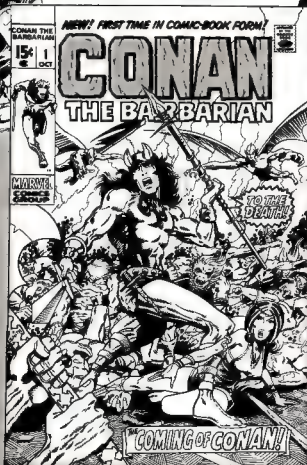
different kinds of stories—weird stories, adventures, westerns, romance, glamor, kid stuff. The popularity of the heroes was on the wane; and so, one by one, they began to drop out of sight. A few short lived titles appeared: NAMORA (three issues), SUN GIRL (three issues), another ALL WINNERS (one issue), BLACKSTONE (four issues) and THE WITNESS (one issue). By 1950 the Marvel heroes had all vanished. Except for a couple of dozen comics in 1954 and 1955, they would not be heard of again until the Marvel Age commenced in the 1960's.

But that's another story.



THE COMING OF CONAN

by Roy Thomas



Way back in the golden days of 1970, before CONAN took the world by storm and showed that sword and sorcery could be done successfully both creatively and economically, Roy Thomas, then editor-in-chief of Marvel comics, took time out from his busy schedule to write a three-part essay on our mighty barbarian for the pages of the now-defunct fan magazine MARVELMANIA. We are proud to present, in the Rascally One's own words, the origin of the Marvel CONAN.

It's not a well-kept secret that I write from four to seven comics a month. And I obviously have little or no time for the type of writing which I ordinarily like to see go out over (or under) my own name. However, I believe very strongly in fandom as a developing point for new talent (Do I have a choice?) and I also believe in keeping the hard-core fans as informed as possible of the how and why of things, so if you'll keep in

mind that I don't really have the time for polishing, rewriting, and for those long moments of contemplative thought which it takes to come up with a clever, well-turned phrase, I shall try to sit down once a month and dash them off.

What will my rough-shod ramblings cover in future months? Just about anything that comes to my busy little mind, in all probability. One month I may launch into invective

against fans who don't understand why and how things are done by pros—but most months, I'll be attempting instead to fill that information gap with details that you will not find (often for reasons of space) on the Bulfinch Bulletin pages or in the letters pages I write.

For various reasons, I'd like to spend the remainder of this first column (and perhaps the second, as well!) on the newest addition to

the Marvel lineup—a pet project of mine called *Conan the Barbarian*. To be published at first on a bi-monthly basis, with the first issue due out in the middle of July, this book is particularly near and dear to my little heart—for reasons which I'll explain in detail next time around.

This issue, however, I thought I'd use our Cimmerian stalwart to illustrate something which will probably interest most fans—just how a Mar-

vel cover is produced, right now, in the first half of the year 1970

By the time we finally got around to thinking about a possible cover for the first issue of *Conan*, artist Barry Smith—nestling in the shadow of Buckingham Palace, as most Marvelites know by now—had no less than three issues of full penciling under his belt. Thus, the slight insecurity he had felt and shown on the first issue was largely gone, the second and third issues had shown a surer, clearer grasp on both Conan himself and the spirit of the Hyborian Age, which is the way it should be. (Anybody out there remember those first few fumbling issues of mags called *Fantastic Four* and *The Amazing Spider-Man*?) But, more about those first three issues—and a fourth on which Barry is currently laboring—next month

For the nonce, let's look at how the cover was produced. First, after discussing the matter with me, staff artist Marie Severn worked out a pen-and-ink sketch (as she does for most, though not all, current Marvel covers). This was done on 8" by 11" typing paper, and is intended to be used as a rough guide to the actual artist at a later stage

I had suggested a powerful figure of a besieged Conan, the obligatory ill-clad young lady at his knee, nudged about by barbarian foes—perhaps with a winged demon or two from the story swooping towards him from above. Marie rendered this quite well and clearly, forgetting only the pair of demons which a simple knife-prod from me persuaded her to add. Stan then approved the cover (something which is not automatic—an artist often goes through several sketches before an acceptable one is decided upon), as did publisher Martin Goodman, and the sketch (since lost) was sent to mimee olde England for Barry to pencil

Barry later stated that he would have liked to ink it as well, and no doubt he'd be given a shot at doing precisely that on the second issue. However, this first time, we went to see the pencilled cover first, just in case there were any substantial changes to be made. Like any comics company, Marvel is generally pickier about its covers than about any one panel within the mag itself. This is as it should be, since the cover is at least a major factor (or some say the chief factor) in the sales of any single issue of a magazine

At any rate, Barry's pencilled cover appears on the cover of this magazine just as it came in to use. At first glance it will probably seem identical to the finished, inked-and-tethered cover—but a closer examination will reveal the changes wrought (at Stan's and my direction, for the most part) by John Verpoor-

ten, who inked the cover—beautifully, I believe

The most important and noticeable change was in Conan's sword. As pencilled by Barry, its point was hidden by the ax-handle in the foreground; I felt strongly that the tip of the blade should be thrusting toward the reader (and that approaching hatchetman). This John accomplished with a minimum of redrawing; at the same time he straightened the ax-handle itself, which seemed a bit crooked. (Many pencils, Gil Kane among them, often do not use a ruler at all on straight lines within a story, relying upon the inker to take care of that detail—so what Barry did was hardly unusual or slovenly craftsmanship.)

As he inked, John made other, less apparent changes. He left off, for instance, certain tiny black specks which Barry had added on Conan's muscles, and which we feared might end up looking nothing more than a case of terminal blackheads. Again, this is hardly unusual; the supreme case of muscle-altering at Marvel, of course, was always Vince Colletta's inking of Jack Kirby's *Thor*, as a comparison of that mag with Jack's other titles would nicely illustrate

You will notice also that John, as befits both his style and the tastes of Marvel at the present time, used a thick-and-thin approach inspired by the likes of Joe Sinnott and other powerful inkers. While many artists prefer their pencils inked precisely as drawn, with a single thickness to all lines, it's our feeling that Verpoorten's approach is a much more commercial one—and in this case is probably closer, in fact, to the way Barry would have inked the cover himself, since our British bombshell is a top-notch inker (and will, in fact, be inking the works of some other pencils in an upcoming mystery-mag or two).

Other changes? There are a few—but I'll leave it to the individual reader to decide whether they're worth hunting for. The press of work beckons—and so, I'm told, does *Marvelmania's* deadline. Next time, I'll discuss how Marvel came to publish a Conan mag in the first place—and precisely what a few Robert E. Howard devotees have had to say about the Thomas/Smith version

Later /

I had read a bit of Burroughs in my lamented youth and was beginning to flirt demurely with Tolkien's triple-tome, so I read on ... and then came the hooker: "The Conan stories are all laid in Howard's imaginary Hyborian Age, between the sinking of Atlantis and the beginning of recorded history"

Conan certainly would make a good comic book hero. Everyone was agreed upon that.

Everyone except the dyed-in-

the-wool purists who insisted upon a requisite volume of blood in each four-color issue.

Everyone except the sheltered souls who felt that there sure was a lot of sex in Robert Howard's original Conan stories, and that the tales couldn't survive without it.

Everyone except those who felt that Frazetta was the only artist since da Vinci.

Everyone except those who thought it better not to put Conan the Cimmerian into comics rather than to weaken the character to even the minutest degree

And, finally, ... everyone but me

The first time I tried to read a Conan story was probably about 1967 when I picked up a copy of Lancer Books' first paperback volume of *Conan the Adventurer*. I had never heard of him before and didn't know that well over a dozen adventure stories had been printed in the old *Weird Tales* pulp magazine in the early and middle thirties. Still, the combination of a powerful Frank Frazetta cover and the back-cover blurb got to me

There he was on the front of the book. Conan was staring out at me with all the bristling intellect of a Mongoloid hockey-center, a blurry-looking girl growling thornlike out of his leg atop what appeared to be a compost-heap of headbashed foes. Charming

And that blurb: "A hero mightier than Tarzan ... Adventures more imaginative than *Lord of the Rings*!"

Instantly, I had visions of a science-fiction masterpiece concerning some sort of untamed ... crumbling remnants of a superior scientific civilization, a sort of latter-day John Carter with moxie, only this trusty broadsword betwixt himself and the raygun toting hordes of lost Atlantis

The first few pages of "People of the Black Circle", the first story in the volume, convinced me I was wrong—that this wasn't really science fiction at all but straight fantasy; there were no ray-guns or airships and the sunken Atlantis had reached roughly the level of civilization of pre-Roman Gaul. In short, I felt I had been had. I could not arouse the slightest iota of interest in this tale of what was obviously a princess from India. (Never mind that Howard may have called it "Vendhya" ... it was still India to me.)

The book was buried in my closet and I forgot I had it

Meanwhile, the Lancer books caught on, and there were letters to Marvel itself. Our readers wanted to see Burroughs material done in comics, and Tolkien material, and finally Conan. And especially Conan, for that matter it became obvious to me that, whereas Tolkien's appeal seemed to be almost totally to the older (and, thus, minor)

elements of our readership, the appeal of the Cimmerian cut across the board. Youngsters, no matter what their age, and doddering 30-year-olds—they all loved him. Teeny-boppers who had written with a shaky scrawl and college students who used an electric typewriter to conceal that they wrote with a shaky scrawl ... they all loved his adventures. I began to get interested—from a strictly commercial point-of-view, you understand—still didn't read any more of the stuff though

And finally came the 1969 Comic Art Convention in New York. Dick Giordano, Creepy publisher Jim Warren, and I composed a panel on Economics in the Comics. During the question-and-answer period, someone asked the three of us to say what our particular pet projects were which we'd like to see the comics undertake. I found myself mentioning Conan—since I was beginning to think that he might possibly sell to the same readers, those who had kept *Thor* and *Namor* healthy, happy and alive

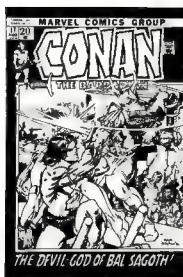
Possibly.

At any rate, I made a mental note to pursue the matter further. Somewhere along the line, I discussed the matter with Stan when he too commented on the possibilities of doing Conan or any similar character. But we had decided it might be too risky, inasmuch as the stories take place twelve-thousand years ago, and comics set in an era such as that—those smacking of history—had not set a sterling record as sellers. Consider *Valer*, *Piracy*, *Black Knight*, *Brave and Bold* Viking Prince issues, and probably even my old favorite, *Tor*, if the final sales figures be known

Still, the comics business was soft—so of my own volition I began, after the convention, a study of sword-and-sorcery material (As the initiated call the genre.) Weirdly enough, I began with Lin Carter's Thor books—whose Valkarth hero is a combination of John Carter and Conan. I spoke to Carter (Lin, not John) about the possibilities of a Thor comic and he seemed a bit interested. We didn't discuss money

(Why not Conan right away instead of Thor, you ask? Frankly, I knew our financial situation was limited, and Marvel had not done one of those "licensed" comic titles in twenty years, since *My Friend Irma* and *Pinky Lee* Comics. Conan was star of the largest-selling paperback series of all time and somehow seemed a distant star and outside our grasp or even contemplation for the time being. Thor had the rayguns and air-ships of Barsom mixed in with the barbarism and the time-lost feeling of Conan)

Stan liked the idea of Thor as well as I did, and for the same



incidental and clumsy—and needless-sex and a hero who would be a real psychiatrist's nightmare—but still there was about the Conan stories an excitement, a sense of atmosphere and mood, that trans-



Due to budgetary limitations, my original choice for penciler—John Buscema, who loves to do sword-and-sorcery art even though he does not read the stories—was out of the question. Jim Steranko was dormant and mumbling about his own Talon character, who will doubtlessly be appearing someday somehow somewhere. Jack Kirby, best super-hero artist of all time, wasn't available.



Howard stories, adapt other Howard tales into Conan tales, or to completely originate new Conan stories to fill the demand.]

The first result was not, frankly, a happy one as far as either Stan or Barry or I was concerned. From the very splash page, things failed to go quite as we'd wanted them to. Barry had as we expected, plunged right into the story for a scene of Conan whirling about [Reprinted here last issue], albeit in rather restrained fashion on the first page. Barry promptly had him leap off a cliff into a pile of Vanir. Now, I'm just as big on in medias res as the next writer—but I felt that this would



reasons, and decided that it was I who should discuss the matter with our publisher, Martin Goodman. Stan himself has repeatedly stated that he's not really quite sure just what the term "sword-and-sorcery" means and garbled attempts at elucidation by frenetic fans had not made the point any clearer in his mind—or mine. Still, if I didn't know art, I knew if I liked it—and I rather liked Thorngor.

So, after mulling it over and considering a number of angles, did Mr. Goodman Thorngor the Barbarian might well just be our next title.

But then, unexplainedly, things broke down. I told Carter of our offer, and was informed his agent would call me within the week. He didn't. I called Carter again, received the same assurances—followed by more weeks of silence. Frustration, vexation.

Meanwhile, I had begun to delve a bit more into sword-and-sorcery fiction to discover what I really liked about it. I read the remainder—the other four—of the Thorngor novels and found them fun, if derivative. I read parts of *Stormbringer* by Moorcock, and sections of Fritz Lieber's Gray Mouser stuff, and found it probably to be better literature but poorer comic book material. A glance at D.C.'s *Nightmaster*—the only true sword-and-sorcery comic to date and a known flop—confirmed me in my opinion; for it was of the Moorcock/Lieber tradition and I felt it was bad, bad, *beased*—despite my respect for the men who put it together—Denny O'Neill and penciler-inker Berni Wrightson.

And I began to page through a few of those Conan books, as well.

Strangely, I discovered that I was enjoying it more this go-round. I found that there was a sensationalistic pulp-writer who really knew his trade. Too much blood-and-gore for my personal, self-styled tastes, with

cended Burroughs, Carter, and others I had read. Yes—at the risk of sounding anti-intellectual—even old Tolkien himself. Not as good literature, perchance, as Tolkien and Lieber—but easily the best sword-&-sorcery hero of all for adaptation into comics—with Howard's King Kull, a close runner-up.

And meanwhile my phone grew studded with an array of cob-webs while I waited in vain for Lin Carter's agent to call. (He never did. I still don't know why.)

Fortunately, in the introductions to several of the Conan volumes, L. Sprague de Camp gave the address of Glenn Lord, literary executor of the Howard estate—largely because Lord published the *Howard Collector*, a sometime publication, which keeps digging up previously unpublished and unread Howard manuscripts. I contacted Lord for several reasons—including a private project of my own, since abandoned—and found him interested in seeing Conan reach the younger masses—through a comic book.

One thing led to another and—after a seemingly interminable delay, caused solely by Marvel's lawyers' failure to act promptly—the very first issue of *Conan the Barbarian* is almost up on the newsstands as I write these pershable . . . these soft-spoken words.

Last month, we discussed how it came to pass that Marvel decided to produce a comic of *Conan the Barbarian* and by the time you read the first issue and see how the comic finally materialized on the stands.

Not quite the way I'd like it, though—There are always things which don't work out the way I want.

And then there was Barry Smith, my personal second choice. A talented young Britisher, recently returned to the Isles, and all of twenty summers old. Always on the verge of proving he was the truly good comic book artist that we all felt he would one day be. Willing to read and work over the material, and eager to try his all at a strip which hadn't already been established by someone else. Barry Smith it was and I am glad!

Now I set about in earnest to read all Conan material. And I found this time a distinct pleasure in some of the better stories (mostly the ones by Robert E. Howard himself; L. Sprague de Camp was a smoother writer, but his stories just didn't seem like Conan to me. Lin Carter seemed much like de Camp, though less sure-handed as a writer. And Nyberg's *Return of Conan* read too much like a bad Burroughs pastiche—the one real loser in the ten published volumes, for my money.) Barry read several of the books, too—and then, working from my rather sketchy synopsis he began to draw.

[Editor's Note: When Howard, the creator of CONAN, died at age thirty, several Conan stories had been printed in the Weird Tales pulp. More recently, the demand for Conan adventures in the paperback books caused several writers, Carter, de Camp, and Nyberg, to be engaged to complete a number of unfinished

make it difficult to acclimate the reader to the fact that he was in a world of 12,000 years ago which was physically & mystically different from today's, or even yesterday's, world; besides, there just wasn't that good action we needed in the first few pages of the book. After that it began to pick up and by the second half of the book, Barry was "feeling" Conan and drawing Conan.

So—I sliced a brief skumsh out of those last few pages where it actually retarded climax building, and asked Barry to redraw the splash—and insert a new second page, showing the Vanir and Aesir battling it out and establishing Conan before he leaped off that cliff shouting a familiar "By Crom!" The end result was a much happier book, although still one with which we were not totally satisfied. Dan Adkins, long one of my favorite inkers, did a creditable job on the issue—but somehow he didn't seem precisely the inker for Conan, on second glance. (There were other considerations for taking Dan off Conan as well, none of them as discreditable as Dan's considerable talent, but they are extraneous here and I won't go into them.)

Thus, it was with some trepidation that I roughly plotted the second

issue. The end product, this time, however—though quite different from what I had envisioned when I wrote the synopsis—was one of the best art jobs Barry turned in to date, with some crystal-clear story telling, improved art and layouts, and a firm grasp on just what the material was all about (This is all the more odd because this second issue is as much Burroughs-oriented as Howardsque, even though Barry professes never to have read any of Edgar Rice Burroughs' work—and I've read precious little of him since I was 14 or so.) At any rate, it was with the second issue, particularly that I became truly proud to be associated with the comic—and I think Barry feels the same way, too.

We immediately began work on future issues, all to be published chronologically and in agreement with the informal history of Conan's careers as mapped out years ago by fans. Thus this first issue illustrates

names will be different. Confusing, though, only to the expert—and the punist—whose weight in the balance is next to nil, anyway.

And, as much as de Camp did with certain of the stories, we'll be adapting various non-Conan tales into Conan stories, something often rather easy to do. Issue #3, for instance, is an adaptation of the posthumously-published Howard tale "The Grey God Passes" which has a slave-hero by the name of Conn (close, no?) and which contains several elements of considerable literary merit. Good comic book material, too!

—And if you don't like the series by when you get to #4, "The Tower of the Elephant," I'd suggest you swear off it forever because it will never take. In it, I believe that Barry and I achieved the balance between literary and artistic and commercial considerations which we have been striving long months to achieve. Whether I shall find that anyone likes that issue or not—I shall doubtless consider it one of the best of the Marvel or non-Marvel comics of 1971... with scarcely a blush crossing my dimpled cheeks. I think I know good comic books—And this is a real good one.

This hardly surprised me. Long before the news of the coming of Conan to Marvel comics had broken in fanzines, I predicted precisely tones and types of mail we would receive in advance of the book's publication—which will probably be a great deal like the mail that will arrive in July and August when the magazine is on the newsstands.

Many notes, of course, were pure congratulatory epistles—amazed but glad that Marvel was responding to fan pressure (and it is, to a certain extent, no doubt about it). Many expressed the viewpoint that only Frank Frazetta (or possibly one of his disciples such as youngblooded Bernie Wrightson, who is now doing a *King Kull* adaptation for us) could possibly illustrate it. I won't dignify that viewpoint with much reply, even though I admire Frazetta's artwork, because Conan got along just fine for some years before Frazetta came on the scene—and these over-eager souls forget that, at least before this comic-book, sword-and-sorcery has been primarily a medium for writers, not artists.

Other notes, of course, castigated us even for trying to do a Conan comic under the Comics Code. The limitations on blood and sex in Code-approved comics, they felt, would stop us from a decent interpretation. I don't agree, obviously but this point is, at least, a defensible one.

A few readers, not fans of Barry's work in the past, learned that Smith was to do the drawing and denounced it, sight unseen. I expected that I would be denounced for daring to tread in the footsteps of Howard and de Camp, as well, but that's one prediction that hasn't materialized—yet.

self-appointed committee-of-one to protect the valiant Cimmerian from the ravage by Marvel, DC, or any other card-carrying Comics Code member. He was, he intimated, in possession of L. Sprague de Camp's actual home address, and he was going to write him a personal letter, urging him to take action against us. (In point of fact, de Camp seems not to have felt strongly one way or the other about the proposed comic as it concerned neither his written material nor a paperback he had done.)

There is little one can do with fanatics... outside of shooting them or ignoring them. I was something closer to the second extreme, though I couldn't resist pointing out to the skeptic that even the critics in the *New York Times* wait until they've seen a play to review it. I'd suggested then that he give us one issue, preferably a few, since a comic book is a growing—a progressing organism... And then write a more coherent criticism which would be given such consideration as it deserves. He hasn't troubled a certain Associate Editor at Marvel since.

Luckily, those persons who have viewed one or more Conan tales in advance of publication—they have, despite reservations, been much more enthusiastic. Writer Ted White, never a strong Barry Smith fan, felt our British bombshell had finally come of age by the second issue. Glenn Lord, executor of the Robert E. Howard estate, commented that he preferred Smith's rendition to the more "brutish" Frazetta version (as I do).

One thing, though, seems for certain. For as long as Conan the Barbarian is published, in comic book form by Marvel, there are certain to be admirers and detractors—writing page after page of learned and passionate discourse on each issue.

I hope they go on writing for a long... long time.



the "Fruitless raiding against the Vanir" mentioned in the Lancer volume *Conan*, while the second issue takes place as not too far afterward, the beast-men of #2 take their existence from passages in Howard's "Hybionan Age" essay (pp. 25 and 27 of *Conan*; if you want to look it up.) Number three carries Conan to the border between Hyperborea and Brythunia—in order to establish the long-standing hatreds, Conan feels for the Hyperboreans—mentioned in a number of volumes. And with #4, we have—"Tower of the Elephant," an adaptation of the earliest, (chronological) Conan tale written by Howard.

A word about the series. We'll be adapting many of the actual Robert E. Howard *Conan* stories—though not those written by de Camp, Carter and Nyberg. Legal reasons, you understand. Here and there, where de Camp edited Howard, we'll be working from the original Howard manuscripts (or Xerox copies thereof) so that a few facts and a few



[Sel Buscema, by the way, takes over on the inking with issue #2, and while he's not necessarily a better inker than Adkins, *per se*—that's not important anyway—he lends to Barry Smith's pencils an illustrative approach which is almost perfect. Only a fan who has a shrine to Frazetta resting in his alcove could fail to find some merit in the Smith/S. Buscema collaboration.]

But, enough bugle-blowing. After all, as I write these lines, I know that the fans will be with their own opinions, and that it is theirs—not mine—that will eventually make or break the book. Some of those opinions, in fact, began to arrive at our offices even before the book came out.



One particularly distasteful individual upon hearing but the vaguest rumor of Marvel publishing *Conan* as a comic book—wrote me a personal diatribe which vilified the whole idea. He saw himself as a



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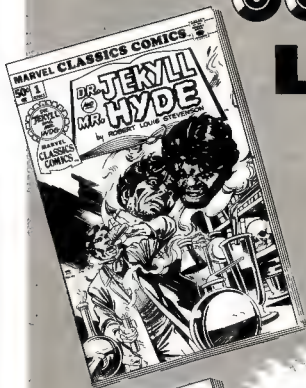
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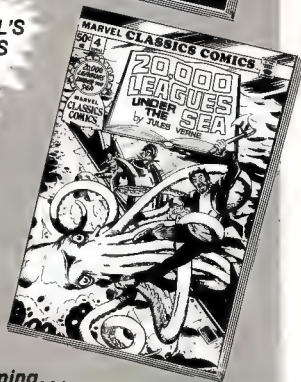
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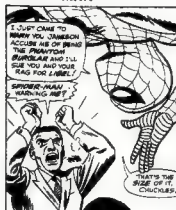
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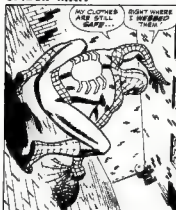
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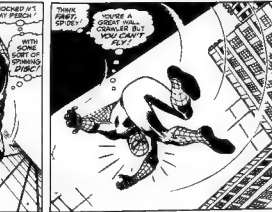


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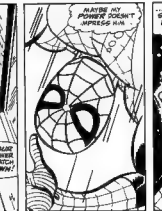
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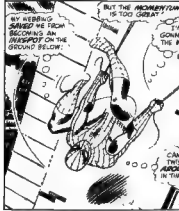
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HE SHALL BE MISSED

IN THE MARVEL MANNER

Marvel Comics are written in a manner different from those of any other company, in that they are written plot first, and then the script. For those unfamiliar with this method, we present the following: a plot for **TOMB OF DRACULA #32**, illustrated with key sequences from the story. The book was written by Marv Wolfman, and illustrated by Gene Colan and Tom Palmer.



Page 8

1: Full page splash. Quincy Harker is sitting in his wheelchair. His dog, Saint, is by his side. They are in the Livingroom of the Harker Estate and are staring at the door as if waiting for something to happen. A phone is on a table by him, a comfortable looking chair across from him. There is tension in Quincy's face—for he feels he may die tonight if all does not go well.

2: He turns to Saint and says this may be

his final night—he knows Dracula is coming to confront him, to see Quincy about the folder (which is by the telephone) of papers on the table by his side. He looks up at the fireplace and the urn which contains his daughter's ashes. He looks sad as he remembers that Dracula killed her... that Dracula slew his wife. From the vantage point of the dog we see that Quincy is a bit tired... showing his age. Quincy is saying that Quincy is old,

crippled—Dracula, even after five hundred years, has his youth, his power, etc. Yes, this may be the end of his long struggle. Suddenly the phone rings, which startles Quincy. His device picks up the phone as it did several issues' back (the rod holding it in the center and the microphone nearby) and Dracula is on the other end (we don't see Drac—we only hear his voice) saying that he is coming to see Quincy—they have much to talk about.

3: Quincy says he is ready, and the phone is lowered as Quincy turns to Saint and says this is it. Cut now to the double-sided page as we did last issue—Taj's story going down the left hand side and Dracula's down the right. This will continue for several pages, so follow this, please. Taj: Taj stands firmly before the door to his home, while the townspeople mass outside holding stakes, crucifixes, etc. The front man says to Taj that Taj knows what must be done. Frank: Frank is walking towards the cave in Brazil—the zombies are walking there, blank-eyed. He's walking up to one of them

4: Taj: The men surge forward, and Taj, even though he battles them, is forced away. The men break in and run past Taj's wife who is in her wheelchair. She looks frightened, but one man, trying to be nice to her, says there can be no other way—the outcome had been decided so long ago. Frank: Frank, happy-go-lucky, pats one of the zombies on the back saying he's the new foreman. The zombie turns around and Frank sees the zombie for the first time—he is shocked. He turns and he sees about half-a-dozen zombies walking towards him.

5: They enter the room in Taj's story in the first panel and we see the kid, still lying on his bed, strapped down, crucifixes on the wall, blood being pumped into him. Now, Gene, this may be complicated—for panel two and three down this left-hand panel I want EXACTLY the same picture drawn, which means you may as well draw it only once and we'll stat it here, so make these two panels exactly the same size. What I want is a shot from behind the bed—so we only see the top of the kids head. On the left hand side of the panel is the silhouette (partially lighted) of the man who spoke to Taj before grasping the stake in his hands. The stake is poised over the boy's heart. The hands are across the top of the page. In the center is Taj running into the room, face anguished, hands out as if to stop the man from killing his son. The fourth panel is totally black. The reason I want two of the same panel is that on the

first we will put white zipatone over Taj—making the focus of the picture of man, his stake, and the kid. In the second frame, we'll put the white zip over them, leaving Taj clear—sort of like those shots in the movies where the focus changes in one scene to highlight specific subjects. Frank: The zombies come closer in panel 1. In panel 2 switch to his friend, Danny, on the phone—Danny is saying all is going well—the zombies will get Frank. In panel 3 down, Danny just like panel four of the Taj sequence.

- 6: Layouts back to normal. Drac is hanging up his phone (he is in a phone booth) saying all is going as planned. His agents drove the people in Taj's village angry, so they came to kill Taj's son. Drac flies off as a bat heading towards Harker Estates and he continues his thoughts—so Taj was forced to leave England. His people brought Frank Drake to South America—separating both of them from Quincy—making it so much easier to wipe out his foes. As for Rachel, well, everything has been taken care of with her . . . so Quincy, the weakest of them all is alone. Last of these panels should show Drac swooping down onto the Estate grounds. Cut to inside. Harker is staring at the open door which Dracula fills—his cape flapping in the wind outside. The moon covering him from behind so Drac appears to be of solid black. He merely asks to come in. Harker says Drac doesn't need the formalities . . . he has been inside the mansion many times before. Inside now, Drac looks at Harker who is holding a growling Saint back by a collar that is half exposed (the collar has studs on it but I don't want anyone to see them yet as they will play an important role in a few pages—they're shaped like a cross). Drac is saying here that Harker looks well considering he is still recovering from his last battle with Lilith back in Chillers #1

- 7: Drac, smiling, reaches to pet Saint, but the dog growls, snaps—very well trained, Drac says. Quincy asks Drac to take a seat, pointing to the chair in the splash page. Drac, smiling, says no thanks—once before he narrowly escaped death when he sat in one of Quincy's rigged chairs. He asks Quincy to show him what this one would have done. Quincy presses a button on his wheelchair and the arm of the chair opens—coming from it is a metallic clamp that attaches itself to the other arm. Directly in the center of this is a wooden stake pointing in. In other words, if Drac had sat down this would have trapped him and instantly staked him in the heart because of the speed and force the clamp spun around with Drac says very good—he has always found Quincy's devices clever—why, he remembers one back in 1919 which . . . ah, never mind. He is here on business.

- 8: Drac, standing by the fireplace and the urn (he can finger the urn while speaking and Quincy could tell him to get his hands off of it) says that he learned last issue



Page 10

that Quincy had some papers which indicated Drac was not only alive after his battle with Doctor Sun (issue #20 & 21) but was losing his powers. Drac demands to know how he is losing them, because he noticed some of them slipping as well. Quincy says he knows, but he is not telling. Because if Dracula's powers are being drained, Quincy wants to kill him now. At that, Saint, who has been sitting staring menacingly at Drac, leaps. The vampire grabs the dog in mid-air by the neck as if to strangle him, but his hand begins smoking

- 9: The reason is that in touching the dog's neck, he touched the crucifixes on the collar, which we now see Drac slams Saint away and turns to see Quincy is gone. Drac says he will find Harker—and he points to one of several doors and

says Harker is behind that one—he can hear Harker breathing rapidly—due to his bat-like radar hearing. He breaks into the next room which is a pool-room. Quincy is at the far end holding a cue stick, which he fires—shooting a wooden spear which hits Drac in the shoulder

- 10: Drac angrily pulls it out and says there is no way for Quincy to escape—the house is only so big. Quincy pushes a button on his chair and suddenly the pool table rights itself up, standing on end—two sides slip out which makes the pool table form a giant cross standing in the middle of the room. Not only that, but the walls suddenly pull down revealing mirrors everywhere—so that everywhere Drac looks he sees the giant cross. He screams in horror at the thousands of crosses



Page 17

- 11: Holding his cape over his eyes, Drac tries to move closer when out of Quincy's chair comes a half dozen wooden darts which hit Drac everywhere. Drac roars in pain as he stumbles painfully onwards toward Quincy, pulling the darts out as he does. Quincy's chair, which is self-propelled, flashes by Drac as the vampire stumbles headlong into a mirror, crashing into it, breaking it as he does. Drac pulls the last dart out of his arm and as he collapses, turns into mist.
- 12: The mist flows through the room and out the door where a reformed Drac falls weakly to the ground. He finds himself in a hallway with a door at the end. He knows Quincy went through it. As he lifts himself up the door behind him slams shut and a grating along the top of the hallway opens—sending cloves of garlic

falling down on Drac. As they begin to fall, however, he changes back into mist and flows onward towards the other door.

- 13: Inside the other room which looks like a den, complete with Bar, Quincy moves in his wheelchair towards the bar area. As he does, the mist forms up on the ceiling. Quincy reaches the bar and there is a small control panel by the side. Suddenly Drac, as a human, falls atop Quincy, pulling Quincy out of his chair and tosses him to the ground. Quincy's glasses fall off, and we see his eyes are glowing red—he's been bitten so many times he was affected. This is the first time we have ever seen Quincy without his glasses, so make it a strong impact shot—something special.

- 14: Quincy tries bracing himself when Drac starts to walk towards him, calmly saying Quincy will die now. Quincy pulls himself up to the bar . . . up to the control panel and as Drac reaches him, pulls the stud on the control panel down. Drac realizes at the last moment this shouldn't happen and grabs Quincy's hand, wrenches it free from the panel and crushes the rod in his own hand. He then turns towards Quincy who is once again on the ground, when suddenly the lights go out.

- 15: We see Quincy's eyes glowing and Drac says he, too, can see in the dark, so this play is useless. Drac moves closer—cut once or twice to Harker—there is fear showing in his face—when suddenly once more, Drac receives a shock—from the center of each wall a wooden arrow shoots out—hitting Drac on all four sides, and one right through his heart.

- 16: Drac rears in pain—his face contorts—Quincy, trying to pick himself up says the device was a timer . . . even though Drac crushed it, it had already set the proper mechanisms in motion. First the lights were set to shut off, then the new radar unit he created two months back homed in on Drac's heart, and when all four arrows were synchronized, they went off. Drac, still in pain, slams Quincy into his wheel chair and over it—he curses Harker as he holds the arrow which is inside his chest.

- 17: Harker grabs the side of the rocker and uses all his strength to pick himself up . . . it is slow and Drac, still writhing in pain, finally collapses just as Harker reaches the chair—his face bleeding, sweating, etc. Harker sees Drac on the floor, holding the arrow in his chest and begins shouting saying Drac is finally getting what he deserves—he killed his daughter, his wife, all his relatives. He hopes Drac is suffering—this is a frenzied shot of Quincy, totally blowing the cool he has tried to keep all these years.

- 18: Drac, on the floor, his face already decaying, bone showing through, says Harker has not won—call Rachel Van Helsing and see Harker says this is a trick. Drac replies that even if it is, Drac is at his weakest—he can't do anything. What is there to lose. Unsure, Harker picks up the phone by the bar and calls. Switch to Rachel's apartment. Rachel is being held tightly by a female vamp in a very sexy costume. Another holds the phone to her. Rachel's clothing is half torn off—her face is bruised, battered and bleeding. The place is a mess. Rachel screams out to Quincy that she is being held by vampires who will kill her unless Drac is freed, but, she shouts, let Drac die—she would gladly give her life for his. Last panel back at Harkers Quincy is still holding the phone—shocked. Drac is saying Harker has the choice now—either Rachel or Dracula . . . and if Rachel dies—Harker will always know he caused it. Wow, what a decision to make. Continued next issue

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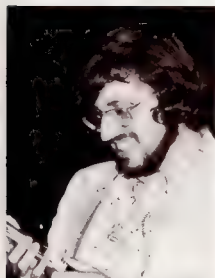
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Diabolical DUFFY VOHLAND



Sparkling SCOTT EDELMAN



Marvelous MARV WOLFMAN



Fancy NANCY MURPHY



Titanic TONY CERNIGLIA



Nifty NORA MACLIN



Beamish BARBARA ALTMAN



Lilting LENNY GROW



MARY "Mary Mac" McPHERRAN



Boisterous BILL MANTLO



Forensic PHIL RACHELSON



Jovial JANICE COHEN



Melodic MORRIE KURAMOTO



Stunning STU SCHWARTZBERG



MIKE "the Tyke" ESPOSITO



Doubtful DANNY CRESPI



Marzipan MARCIA GLOSTER



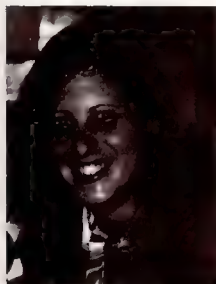
Alpine ANNETTE KAWECKI



Meticulous MICHELE WOLFMAN



Gentleman GENE COLAN



Knowledgeable NANETTE JACOVITZ



Liling LEN WEIN



Roguish ROGER SLIFER



Toneful TONY MORTELLARO



JOHN "Ring-a-ding" ROMITA



Jolly SOLLY BRODSKY



Jazzy JIM SALICRUP



Fearless FRANK GIACIOIA



Happy HERB TRIMPE



Big JOHN BUSCEMA



BILLY "God's Gift" GRAHAM



FRANK "Johnny Hazard" ROBBINS



RON "Power Man" WILSON



Artful ARVELL JONES



KEITH "King" POLLARD



DAVE "X-Man" COCKRUM



Joyful DICK GIORDANO



DOUG "Doc Savage" MOENCH



Nifty NEAL ADAMS



Rapacious RUSS HEATH



Happy HOWARD BENDER



Artful ARCHIE GOODWIN



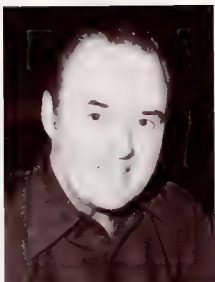
CHIC "chic" STONE



Darling DICK AYERS



Winsome WIN MORTIMER



Joltin' JOE SINNOTT



Gorgeous GEORGE TUSKA



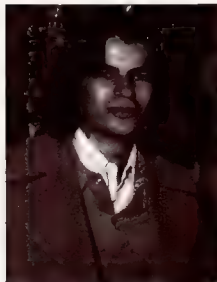
Dimply DENISE VLADIMER



FRANK "Springy" SPRINGER



Dashing DAVE COHEN



Kinky KLAUS JANSON



Tremendous SAL TRAPANI



JOE "Ratin" STATON



JACK "Able" ABEL



MICHELE "Ironing" BRAND



Peerless TOM PALMER



Fickle FRANK BRUNNER



Bashful BOB McLEOD



JOHN "The Logo" COSTANZA



CHARLOTTE "The Letter" JETTER



Our Pal SAL BUSCAMA



JOHN "Tart" TARTAGLIONE

There are more Marvel Madmen we're just dying to present, but the dreaded deadline doom has caught up with us again! We waited till the last minute, tiger, so if any of your favorite comic-fiends have been left out, there's always next year!

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A portion of the hardy souls who managed to clip and paste all 100 Marvel Value stamps!

MARVEL AT THE CON: SAN DIEGO 1974

From wherever the call of comics harkens, members of the batty Bullpen are always quick to answer. What follows is a photographic essay of the Marvel madmen in action. And who knows—when we publish the photos of the Mighty Marvel Comic Convention in FOOM, you might be the lucky bystanders to be immortalized in star-studded black and white!



Roy Thomas is welcomed by SHEL DORF, founder and coordinator of The San Diego Comic-Con.



R.T. in action. The West coast fans wanted to know all about the hallowed halls of Marvel, and Roy had the answers. He spoke to a packed house, and rapped privately with several fans throughout his stay. Marvel couldn't have picked a better ambassador of good will.



Friedrich and Brunner in a pensive mood.



Rapping with the Marvel 100 Club: Jim Harmon, editor of Marvel's popular new "Monsters of the Movies" magazine; Frank Brunner, Mike Friedrich.



Roy speaks!



RICHARD BUTNER, dedicated Marvel fan and chairman for the upcoming 1975 San Diego Comic-Con presents Roy with one of the first "Inkpot" awards for excellence in the media of comic books. Looking on in the foreground are cartoonists Russell "Broom Hilda" Myers and Charles "Peanuts" Schulz.



Michel Bodner seems to be enjoying the festivities. He came all the way from Switzerland to attend the 1974 San Diego Comic-Con and meet with the Marvel gang.



BARRY ALFONSO welcomes Roy to the 1974 San Diego Comic-Con. Barry is publicity chairman and was one of the founding members of the con at age 13. It was Barry who gave Mike Friedrich the inspiration for the story in IRON MAN #72.

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ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN L. LIGHT

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MARVEL ON THE MARCH!

The Mighty Marvel Bullpen is not content to rest on its laurels, so on the next three pages we proudly present our newest, grandest and greatest creations. Read on, tigers! You've been with us through the sixties, now stay with us through the seventies! The best is yet to come!

1 SATANA, THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER (Drawn by the Tribe and written by Chris Claremont, this strip will soon be appearing in the pages of GIANT-SIZE DRACULA.)

2 SKULL THE SLAYER (Drawn by Steve Gan and written by Marv Wolfman, this strip is so new that we don't even know what book it's going to be in yet. So just keep watching!)

3 THE SCARECROW (Drawn by Rico Rival and written by Scott Edelman, this denizen of the night will take over in the pages of DEAD OF NIGHT #11.)

SUNDAY, 16 MARCH
1975, FIVE A.M.

THEY CALL THIS THE HOUR OF
THE WOLF, THE HOUR WHEN
SLEEP IS SHATTERED AND
THE NIGHTMARES COME, THE
HOUR WHEN DARKLING THINGS
RIP FREE OF HELL AND WALK
THE EARTH ONCE MORE, THE
HOUR MOST BABIES ARE
BORN...

...THE HOUR MOST MEN
DIE-- AND ARE DAMNED!

DEATH SONG

SATANA KNOWS MUCH OF DAMNATION,
OF THE TAKING OF MEN'S SOULS, WHY
SHOULDN'T SHE-- IS SHE NOT THE
DEVIL'S DAUGHTER? SCION OF THE
HOUSE OF HELL AND HEIR TO ALL
LUCIFER'S VAST DOMAIN?

IS SHE NOT...EXILE? TRAPPED ON
THIS DUSTMOTE EARTH BY HER
SATANIC FATHER'S EDICT?

IS SHE NOT, IN THE
END, ALONE?

* AS SEEN IN HAUNT OF HORROR #5--LEN.

CHRIS CLAREMONT
AUTHOR

THE TRIBE
ARTIST

MARCOS
LETTERER / COLORIST

LEN WEIN
EDITOR

The Coming of SKULL

THE SLAYER!

COME BACK WITH US... BACK THROUGH THE DARK CORRIDORS OF TIME... BACK BEFORE THE VIOLENT DAWN OF MAN... BEFORE THE RAISED FIST OF HUMAN HATRED SWEEPED OVER THE LAND WHICH SO-CALLED "CIVILIZED" MEN CALL EARTH.



COME BACK WITH US... TO THE WORLD OF THE FAR-FLUNG PAST... TO THE TIME OF --

SKULL
THE
SLAYER!

STAN LEE PRESENTS THE BEGINNING OF AN EPIC BY:

MARY WOLFMAN
CREATOR/WRITER

STEVE GAN
ARTIST

MARCOS
LETTERER

MARY W.
COLORIST

LEN WEIN
EDITOR

ENTER: **THE SCARECROW**

THE SCARECROW REARS BACK HIS MISSHAPEN HEAD AND LAUGHS THE LAUGH OF A **MADMAN**... HIS HUGE Gaping **WOUND** OF A MOUTH PAYING TESTAMENT TO THE INHUMAN NATURE OF THE CREATURE.

THE MERCILESS MANIACAL **ROAR** OF THIS BEING WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE ONLY A **SYMBOL** OF TRICK-OR-TREATING, MAYRIDES, AND PUMPKIN PIES... WOULD **TERRIFY** THE TWO DEAD MEN AT HIS FEET... IF THEY COULD HEAR IT.

HE SEEMS TO **ENJOY** THESE DEATHS... TO **REVEL** IN THEM... TO **BATHE** IN THE WAVES OF **PAIN** WHICH THE DYING MEN SEND FORTH FROM THE DEPTHS OF THEIR SOULS.

ANY **SANE** MAN WOULD LOOK SILENTLY ON THIS SCENE, UNABLE TO **LAUGH**... AND **WONDER**, PERHAPS... "WHAT'S THE **JOKES**?"



WRITTEN BY
SCOTT EDELMAN

DRAWN BY
RICORNAL

COLORS BY
GLYNIS WEIN

LETTERED BY
MARCUS

EDITED BY
LEN WEIN

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AUTOGRAPHS



AUTOGRAPHS



Phil Seuling

A QUICK TESTIMONIAL BY... *Denis Kitchen* 1/75

IN 1970, UNDERGROUND COMIX WERE IN THEIR INFANCY AND I WAS LITERALLY STARVING.

UNLESS SOMETHING HAPPENS QUICK, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO EAT MY COMIC BOOK COLLECTION!

SORRY, CLARK!

KNOCK!
KNOCK!



I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW PHIL SEULING, BUT HE GOT WIND OF MY PRE-DICAMENT AND SENT ME A LARGE SALAMI.

SALAMI FROM MR. SEULING!

WHO?



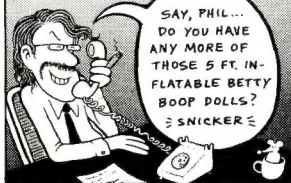
THE FOLLOWING YEAR I WENT TO HIS FAMOUS CONVENTION. WHILE IN N.Y.C. I BUMPED INTO THE SCARIEST, UGLIEST GOONS I EVER SAW! FORTUNATELY, THEY WERE PHIL'S BODYGUARDS...

UH... ME FRIEND OF PHIL...



IN THE YEARS SINCE, I HAVE RELIED HEAVILY ON PHIL AS A PRIME SOURCE OF OLD COMICS AND RELATED ITEMS...

SAY, PHIL... DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE OF THOSE 5 FT. INFLATABLE BETTY BOOP DOLLS? :SNIKKER:



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STILL MORE BRITISH MARVEL WEEKLIES...(continued from front cover)

